Amendments to the Claims:

1 -- 5. (canceled).

6. (currently amended): A method comprising:

analyzing media content to obtain auxiliary data steganographically embedded therein, wherein the auxiliary data is embedded through subtle alterations of data representing at least a portion of the media content;

communicating the auxiliary data to a network resource, wherein the network resource comprises usage rights information catalogued therein, and wherein the usage rights information includes usage rights information that is associated with the media content;

receiving the usage rights information that is associated with the media content from the network resource; and

carrying out an action based at least in part on the received usage rights information.

7. (previously presented): The method of claim 6 wherein the media content is encrypted.

8. (previously presented): The method of claim 6 wherein the network resource comprises a computer in communication with the internet.

PAGE 4/13 * RCVD AT 10/24/2005 9:30:55 PM [Eastern Daylight Time] * SVR:USPTO-EFXRF-6/26 * DNIS:2738300 * CSID:+5034694777 * DURATION (mm-ss):03-08

9. (currently amended): The method of claim 6 wherein the auxiliary data is redundantly embedded in the media content.

10. (previously presented): The method of claim 9 wherein the auxiliary data is redundantly embedded in the media content according to a key.

11. (previously presented): The method of claim 6 wherein the media content comprises geometric registration information steganographically embedded therein.

12. (previously presented): The method of claim 6 wherein the media content comprises at least one of image content, audio content and video content.

13. (previously presented): The method of claim 6 wherein the network resource is remotely located from a processor executing the method recited in claim 6.

14. (previously presented): A computer readable medium including executable instructions stored therein, said instruction comprising instructions to carryout the method of claim 6.

PAGE 5/13 * RCVD AT 10/24/2005 9:30:55 PM [Eastern Daylight Time] * SVR:USPTO-EFXRF-6/26 * DNIS:2738300 * CSID:+5034694777 * DURATION (mm-ss):03-08

15. (currently amended): A method comprising:

decoding a steganographically hidden identifier from a media signal, wherein the identifier is hidden through subtle alterations of data representing at least a portion of the media signal;

communicating the decoded identifier to an on-line registry to obtain usage rights information associated with the media signal;

receiving the usage right information from the on-line registry;

carrying out an action based at least in part on usage rights information.

16. (previously presented): The method of claim 15 wherein the media signal comprises at least one of an image, audio and video.

17. (previously presented): The method of claim 15 wherein the media signal is encrypted.

18. (currently amended): The method of claim 15 wherein the identifier ~~auxiliary data~~ is redundantly embedded in the media signal.

19. (currently amended): The method of claim 18 wherein the identifier ~~auxiliary data~~ is redundantly embedded in the media signal according to a key.

PAGE 6/13 * RCVD AT 10/24/2005 9:30:55 PM [Eastern Daylight Time] * SVR:USPTO-EFXRF-6/26 * DNIS:2738300 * CSID:+5034694777 * DURATION (mm-ss):03-08

20. (previously presented): A computer readable medium including executable instructions stored therein, said instruction comprising instructions to carryout the method of claim 15.

21. (new): The method of claim 6 wherein the auxiliary data is steganographically embedded through digital watermarking.

22. (new): The method of claim 15 wherein the identifier is steganographically hidden in the media signal through digital watermarking.

23. (new): A method comprising:

decoding a steganographically encoded identifier from a media signal, wherein the identifier comprises plural-bits and is hidden in the media signal through changes to data representing at least a portion of the media signal;

providing the decoded identifier to an on-line resource to obtain usage rights information associated with the media signal;

receiving the usage right information from the on-line resource; and

carrying out an action based at least in part on usage rights information.

24. (new): The method of claim 23 wherein said action comprises enabling or disabling a copy operation.

PAGE 7/13 * RCVD AT 10/24/2005 9:30:55 PM [Eastern Daylight Time] * SVR:USPTO-EFXRF-6/26 * DNIS:2738300 * CSID:+5034694777 * DURATION (mm-ss):03-08

25. (new): The method of claim 23 wherein the identifier is hidden in the media signal through digital watermarking.

PAGE 8/13 * RCVD AT 10/24/2005 9:30:55 PM [Eastern Daylight Time] * SVR:USPTO-EFXRF-6/26 * DNIS:2738300 * CSID:+5034694777 * DURATION (mm-ss):03-08